From Deception to Devotion: The Diamonds, Adora, Perfuma, and Challenges in Japan
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From Deception to Devotion: The Diamonds, Adora, Perfuma, and Challenges in Japan

by lefemmerouge

Summary

The Diamonds send emissaries to Earth to deliver a message to Steven about an impending issue on their planet which they claim is beyond their control. Are they being honest with him about this problem, or are they trying to manipulate him for their own selfish ends? Regardless of the answer, the "peace" Steven believed existed on Earth has been shattered into a thousand pieces. All the while, there are rips in the fabric of space time as they make their journeys across Earth and the former Diamond bases, as they begin to work on uniting the Earth together.

Notes

Originally, English translations of phrases in Japanese were below them in parentheses, like for Yuri, Anna, and Takatsuki. I probably used this a lot more in this story than any other previous one, due to the amount of Japanese characters. This story assumes that the events in Wandering Son happened in 2011, the same time as it aired on Japanese television.

Comments are welcome and appreciated.

Update on 1/14/25: Following changes to "Danger, Pleasure, and Arousal in the Tampa Lagoon" which were done on Squidge World and cross-posted here, I have revised some text (the last half of the fic) so as to not create story contradictions, and improve the text. On 2/7/25, I updated this from General Audiences to Teen and Up, as it seemed more appropriate.

Update #2 on 2/8/25: The fic was cross-posted on Squidge World under the title "From Deception to Devotion?: The Diamonds, Adora, Perfuma's Initiative, and Myriad Challenges." When it was posted there, I improved the text, changed dialogue, and made other changes. The updates have been added here, correcting the previously flawed text. If you wish to read the fic without those changes, you can still do so, on Wattpad. I decided to divide this into multiple chapters, four to be exact.

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1: The Diamond Message, Uniting Earth, Pearl and Adora's Blossoming Love, and Pink Candy Beings

Steven, Connie, Greg, Pearl, and Adora were beat. They were glad to be back in Beach City. Suddenly, they saw a flash of light in the sky emanating from a red teardrop-shaped craft, the Roaming Eye. Steven moaned. He didn't want to deal with any additional problems. He assumed this was another issue his mom had caused. He'd have to clean up her messes… *again*.

The ship landed in front of the Beach House. The main door opened to reveal three Ruby soldiers who he'd once named "Doc", "Army", and "Leggy." While "Eyeball" and "Navy" had been with them last time, they sat in a Homeworld jail with Jasper, Aquamarine, and others who staged an attempted rebellion against Steven. While Blue, Yellow, and White Diamond had their reservations about Steven, these Gems were arrested because the Diamonds feared such sentiments could spread across Homeworld, causing unnecessary fissures.

'My Diamond! We are here to give you a message from our radiant luminaries," one of the Rubies declared.

Steven grumbled. He *hated* being called a Diamond. It made him a bit angry.

"Please, call me Steven. I have Pink Diamond's Gem, but I am not her. I am *my own* person."

Doc acknowledged what Steven said. Even so, he still treated Steven like royalty.

"As you will, my liege. In any case, we would like to issue *a new Diamond Communicator.* Not only is there a saved message on it, but it can be used to contact Blue, Yellow, and White Diamond on Homeworld."

Steven was a bit grateful. He remarked, "Thanks, Doc. I see that Army and Leggy are also here. What about Eyeball and Navy? *Why* didn't they come?"

Doc tried to explain what had happened to the other Rubies. It was relatively simple, actually.

"They are in jail…for fomenting an uprising…*against you*. After your bold act on Homeworld, standing up to the Diamonds, many see you as a hero. However, some don't like the changes that have come about. Aquamarine and Jasper are also in jail and are being watched around the clock to prevent any escape attempts."

Steven was surprised to hear that. Perhaps the Diamonds weren't the worst after all. "That is intense! I don't hear from the Diamonds anymore. Maybe the communicator *will change this*."

The Ruby soldiers bowed toward Steven. They annoyed hm, again, with their politeness and reverence usually reserved for a member of royalty. Waving goodbye, they jettisoned off into

space in the Roaming Eye, speeding back to Homeworld. The whole incident had been *strange*, almost like the Rubies wanted to leave quickly so they could hide something.

Steven turned on the Diamond Communicator. While Greg slept on the couch inside the Beach House, Pearl, Adora, and Connie watched it with him. The Diamonds began speaking.

"Steven! This is Blue, Yellow, and White Diamond. We are sorry we can't be there in person, but there are these pink monsters on Homeworld that are turning *everything* into candy…we have contained and quarantined them, but their presence is becoming a nuisance. We thought you'd be able to help us with this dilemma."

The message ended. Adora commented that these pink beings sounded like the same ones that landed in Yokohama, Japan back in mid-April. Everyone else concurred. What no one guessed was that the Diamonds concocted this message as a hoax. They constructed it based on their spies on Earth, specifically among the uncorrupted Nephrites. They wanted more attention from Steven since he reminded them of Pink.

Back on Homeworld, the Rubies arrived in the Diamond throne room. Doc, Army, and Leggy bowed. The Diamonds eagerly awaited their report.

"My Diamonds. We gave the Diamond Communicator to Steven Universe on the planet Earth *as instructed*, lying about 'changes' on Homeworld, although we told him the truth about the 'rebellious' Gems. If there is anything else you'd like us to do, we will happily oblige."

White dismissed them with a waving of her hand. "No, that will be all."

"As you wish, my illustrious Diamonds," the Rubies said in unison.

The Rubies departed the room and returned to the planet's manufacturing facilities. They were helping complete repairs on ships damaged during the fight with the Horde Fleet. New ships would also be built.

While Steven may have thought the Diamonds changed, he was wrong. They wanted to maintain their standing in the universe instead. *Another battle* always remained on the horizon, although the fleet would soon leave the Homeworld orbit so that when Steven arrived, it didn't seem like the war machine still was humming.

Yellow Pearl approached her Diamond and bowed. "My exquisite Diamond. Our scans have showed *a habitable planet* that seems like Earth but has advanced technology. According to our probes, they have one united world government headed by someone called a 'President.' It could prove to be a suitable colony."

Yellow began speaking. "Yellow Pearl, is the planet *currently inhabited*? Fighting any sort of resistance on the planet could complicate plans to make it a province of our grand empire."

Yellow Pearl responded shortly. "Well…my Diamond, those who live on the planet are easily scared and simple to control. We know this thanks to our scouring of the libraries and archives of the planet for previous activity of those who live there at the present time."

Blue Pearl began to speak. She had something to say. "I would like to add something…*my elegant Diamond*."

Blue was all ears. She wanted to hear what was coming next. "Go ahead, Blue Pearl."

Sheepishly, she remarked. "Please don't get angry…but I'd like to draw an illustration."

Blue was surprised. She knew Blue Pearl was expressive, but she had never seen any of it in person. "Oh! You've never shared these talents with us…*feel free* to express yourself openly."

Blue Pearl, often seen as shy and quiet, proceeded to draw the Earth, presenting a possible route for invasion. She also drew an illustration of what a blockade around the planet would look like after a successful invasion.

Blue Diamond smiled with glee. "What *a brilliant idea*! With this strategy, the planet could easily be secured."

Blue Pearl bowed once more. "My eminent Diamond, I am *gracious* to hear such praise," she told Blue.

Back in Beach City, Steven stared aimlessly across the ocean. He was unsure of what he had observed. Even after all the destruction they had wrought on the universe, he believed the Diamonds were sincere.

Despite that, he *couldn't* understand why the Diamonds wanted his help. Pearl and Adora had left, dancing on the beach together, trying to not think about the message. Connie leaned in and attempted to reassure him.

"Steven? Are you ok?...don't take what the Diamonds said *too hard*."

He made clear that he was not ok. What the Diamonds had told him disturbed him.

"I'm not ok. I don't get why they contacted me. Can't they solve their own problems? Aren't they overlords anyway? They are so many times *more powerful* than me."

Connie tried to understand what he was concerned about. "But…what about...," she began.

A voice then remarked, "Steven is right. I'd never support those upper crusts for one second."

Steven didn't expect to hear her. Why was she there, anyway? "Bismuth…have you been listening this whole time?"

She sighed. She did not like the situation right now.

"Yeah…I'm *bummed* that Lapis and Peri are living in Japan now…I've *lost a sense of purpose*. I was fixing up their Peri-Shack to turn it into a proper house…what's the point of that now? Both left to stay with their new friends, that purple-haired lady…pink-haired lady…and that monkey."

Steven wanted to make it clear to Bismuth, and Connie, where he stood. He did not want to stand against his friends. "Lapis and Peri made their choice and we should respect it."

Bismuth knew he was right. But she felt bad about it. "I know, Steven, but *it's depressing*."

Connie somewhat agreed with Steven and with Bismuth. "I agree…however, let's move onto something more productive…what should we do about this message? Should we all travel to Homeworld?"

Bismuth thought this was a very bad idea. Why would they *EVER* want to go back to that awful place again.

"No, no, no! The last time, White Diamond took over Garnet, Pearl, Amethyst, Pearl, Blue Diamond, and Yellow Diamond, turning them into automatons."

Connie realized that she had a point. She wanted to make sure that Bismuth knew exactly what she was talking about. "I remember…*In any case*, we would need a rocket to get there."

Breaking into their conversation was Pearl. She appeared out of nowhere and no one even knew she was there until she spoke the words "I'll build it!"

Connie tried to settle things down. She remembered what happened the last time she built a rocket. Steven *almost died*!

"Pearl, without the help of Peri, we can't do it…"

Adora then began speaking. Steven had trouble keeping track of the conversation's flow at this point.

"I can plan and organize the rocket's construction!," Adora said, snickering.

Pearl tried to reassure her, while remaining wary of this plan. "But…Adora, building things *isn't your forte* despite a love of strategizing and planning."

Before anyone else could say anything, Amethyst entered the conversation. She wanted to say something too.

"Why don't we help unite this planet first and worry about those snobby Diamonds *later*? They can wait...even if they are 'family.'"

For once, Steven felt that someone had said the right thing. He praised her on this plan. "That plan is a great one! Adora, Pearl, and Bismuth…*work on building this rocket*…while the rest of us help bring the world together."

Bismuth wasn't sure about this, but she still wanted them to work together. She pleaded with them. "Why don't we work on it as one? Nothing can hold back the Crystal Gems!"

Everyone else ignored her question at the beginning. Connie piggybacked off the second part what she said, telling the group, "Exactly! Whether Lapis or Peri help us is *their choice*, but we can still bring turn the world into one collective unit…united against any threat!"

This sounded like a swell plan to Steven. Everything was going well. "Sounds great, let's convene tomorrow…in the Beach House."

Adora liked to hear this too. She said something which she knew would annoy Pearl a little. "I'll bring shots of vodka!"

Pearl did not like to hear this at all. She did not want to see Adora go "wild." That would never be good.

She asked, "Adora, what is it about you and vodka? After meeting that woman in Japan, this habit started. *Enough is enough*!"

Adora chuckled. She thought that Pearl needed to lighten up sometimes. "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I read that message loud and clear…I want to explore the world, experience everything!...I was trying to make a joke. It seemed funny to me."

Unfortunately for her, Pearl *wasn't amused*. She scowled. "Adora, your jokes need a lot of work."

Shelving plans to go to Homeworld, for the time being, the Gems decided to aid Earth *first*. This involved checking all the warp pads for any activity.

Adora and Pearl warped around the world, going from places as diverse as the Strawberry Battlefield, the Prime Kindergarten, the Galaxy Warp, and the Ancient Sky Arena.

Steven, Connie, Amethyst, and Garnet traveled to the Moon Base using Lion. Bismuth sat back at the Beach House, relaxing.

Skidding across the floor, they surveyed the base, silent and abandoned. As the everyone else walked up to the third floor, Steven stayed on the second floor.

Curious, Steven touched the observation orb, remembering how Lapis had brought it up before.

He gazed at an image that made his cheeks turn as red as radishes: Adora holding Pearl in her arms, with a smooch on the lips. He knew both had a steady relationship, but never knew they were so intimate.

He said "awe" under his breath. Without warning, Adora *broke into song*. Steven scrambled to turn off the orb but failed miserably. Her words echoed across the base as she sung her heart out.

" Pearl, I wanna weep with you.

Sob tears so you aren't blue

I wanna grin with you

Come together in the perfect glue.

I wanna find the tune which tells of our love

Since, it's all for you, my dove.

I know myself best

But I'm choosing to stay with you on this quest

Pearl, I wanna weep with you.

When we laugh together, I'll feel lovelier too.

I wanna imagine with you.

I won't forget what we have

Because you're more than a hue.

I wanna weep with you…

Glow with you

Daydream with you

When the song concluded, Pearl remarked at its beauty and hugged Adora. They proceeded to run through a field of rose petals, giggling and twirling about, reminiscent of her first time with Rose, exploring the Earth.

Back on the Moon Base, everyone stood in the room in shock, as Steven prepared to turn the orb off. Amethyst lightened the mood, clearly amused. "I knew Pearl would get hitched, after Rose left her for Greg, but I never thought it would be with someone who had such a beautiful singing voice…"

Connie was surprised that Amethyst would speak that way. She chastised her. "Amethyst! Let's look at this, objectively…"

Garnet made clear that all of them should respect the decisions of Pearl and Adora. They had no right to intervene.

"Connie, Amethyst, Steven…Pearl made her choices, as did Adora, and *we should respect them*, regardless of how we feel."

Steven responded before Connie could say anything back. "Garnet, that's true…all of us are surprised, that's all. It's great to see Pearl happy."

Garnet restated her position from earlier. She wanted to make clear how she felt about this.

"Relationships take love, nurturing, and care…Adora and Pearl *have that*...Their emotional connection is growing sturdier every day…clearly, they know how to be strong *in the real way*."

Steven, Connie, and Amethyst acquiesced. Lion yawned on the floor below, not paying attention to this conversation, whether he understood it at all.

Steven silently turned off the orb. As they prepared to return to Earth, Connie spotted pink beings on the moon. Amethyst grumbled and shouted, "not again! How did *they* get here?"

Exiting the Moon Base, the pinkish figures, candy beings like those in Yokohama, were spreading from a spot inside one of the craters. Approaching them, Amethyst and Garnet beat them into shape, causing the beings to retreat to a defensive position. Given the signal, Steven went out, in his bubble, Connie wishing him luck, giving him a peck on the cheek.

Feeling alive, with new energy, he bounced over to Garnet and Amethyst. Bursting his bubble, he *bubbled* the candy beings. Amethyst and Garnet carried him back into the base, so he didn't die from a lack of oxygen. Not knowing if the bubble could be sent back to the Crystal Temple from the Moon, he held *onto it* as they warped back to Earth using Lion.

Once in Beach City, Steven tapped the bubble on the top. It arrived in the Burning Room; a place Peri had once called the "Bubble Dungeon." Their action had ensured that the Panama Wormhole to Etheria would remain open, although passageway clearly wasn't sustainable. In the longer-term, a warp pad connecting the two planets would be better.

Unknowingly, their travel to the Moon created a rip in the fabric of space time. It would, without them being fully aware of it at the time, affect new visitors to the planet, who would arrive on Earth on June 9, 2020, encountering a drastically changed planet which would boggle the minds of Gems.

Chapter 2: Miura, hemp clothes, Beach City, embarrassment, and relaxation

Chapter Summary

Lapis and Peri ask for approval from Utena and Anthy to grow hemp on their property, make a business proposal from Mimi to fund their endeavor, while Steven and his friends relax and play a game together. At the same time, someone comes into the museum, calls Jules "cute", old friends (two of which have begun their gender transitions) meet one another, and Carmen connects with them in the process.

Chapter Notes

Originally this was part of the same story as chapter 1, but I decided to divide it into its own chapter instead, when I posted this on Squidge World.

Back in Japan, Lapis and Peri had early morning tea with Utena and Anthy. Both were glad these friends had given them hospitality in their small house.

They wanted something specific: approval to grow hemp as a crop on their land. Peri explained how she and Lapis had made a hemp shirt for Adora and reminded Utena that the green dress she loved so much was created from the same material. Anthy explained how their farm spanned 215 acres, also expressed as about 87 hectares or about 8,701 ares.

She laughed how their land, if subdivided, could be turned into almost 163 football fields or serve as the space for over 15,819 people to live in the countryside, according to the current standards of the Japanese government. As she recalled, the land had been granted to her through the last will and testament of her grandfather.

Sadly, he had been killed in a fatal hot air balloon accident, apparently by a winged 'angel', a story only Anthy believed, while everyone else thought it was bunk.

For twenty years, Utena and Anthy had been living in the Miura countryside. However, the land had become fallow apart from the area immediately surrounding the house, used by Anthy for her garden. Even so, both agreed to help in whatever way possible. While Peri groused about the possible costs, Lapis reminded her that irrigation would be simple considering she had the power to control water, although this didn't satisfy Peri’s worries. They could only think of two rich people: Greg, back in Beach City, and Mimi, who lived in Tokyo.

Carmen and Jules, who lived in the same city, presumably had money, but not likely enough to fund their endeavor. Lapis cautioned against involving the Gems because she had *unintentionally* lied to Adora about the shirt she wore to her date with Carmen, telling her it was made of hemp when it had actually been a cotton shirt bought from a nearby store.

Peri proposed Mimi as a possibility instead. Luckily, Mimi was still there in the same house, while Rin went back to the office of Asogi Consulting in Tokyo.

A sleepy Mimi yawned, missing her usual morning glass of vodka. Two blurry shapes, one blue and another green, appeared before her.

Rubbing her eyes, she focused more intently, and observed Lapis and Peri patiently watching her from across the room. "Ah! How long have you been there?"

Peri walked toward her and began speaking. "Not very long, Mimi. Sorry to disturb…we wanted to interest you in *a business proposal*."

Mimi got up and approached Peri. She wanted to her what Peri and Utena had to say. "I'm listening…and am intrigued."

Peri snickered. She had a whole plan. "We want to turn this farm into a place to cultivate hemp…to make clothes."

Lapis added, "In fact, we have a sample right here in this house…available for scrutiny."

This made Mimi even more interested. "Really? *I'd love* to examine it."

Lapis so loud that anyone could hear them. It almost deafened Peri and Mimi. "UTENA?! WHERE'S THE DRESS YOU WORE YESTERDAY? THE HEMP DRESS?"

Utena shouted back, at the same decibel level. "IT'S IN THE CLOSET NEAR THE IMA!" She then said, *more softly*. "Please be careful with it."

Lapis made clear her instructions would be followed. "We will, Utena."

Walking over to the closet, Peri and Lapis pulled out the beautiful green custom-made dress both had created, with one strap on each shoulder, creating a u-shape near the chest. Mimi closely scrutinized it, impressed with their handiwork.

Entering the room, and noticing Mimi inspecting the dress, Utena offered to wear it. Lapis reminded her this *wasn't* a fashion show, but Utena insisted, claiming this was "the least she could do."

Mimi complied, letting her take the dress and change into it. Quickly changing, she marched in not long after, wowing everyone.

"Utena, that dress looks great on you!" Utena was glad to hear such praise.

"Thanks! I fancy it myself and I want to show it off all the time. Lapis and Peri, thanks for making this wonderful clothing for me!"

Mimi then remarked, "You're welcome, Utena."

Mimi pondered whether she should assist them or not. She inquired what equipment would be needed for hemp cultivation. Peri admitted to not knowing much, with Lapis lamenting the idea had been silly and worthless. Mimi raised their spirits, promising to give them start-up money, Lapis and Peri *squealing in delight*.

She then went further and offered to be their business manager. She would list their business on the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE), provided she get a percentage of the proceeds, something Lapis and Peri accepted.

Mimi shook their hands and announced, "it's a pleasure doing business with you both."

Realizing she needed to return to Asogi Consulting in Tokyo, Lapis offered to fly her back there, so she wouldn't have to spend money on a train, a suggestion she agreed to.

In Beach City, Adora, Pearl, Steven, Connie, Amethyst, and Garnet unwound after a long day. Out of the game closet, Steven pulled out one of his favorites, Word Scramble, in a small rectangular box, a little beat-up and taped.

Opening the box, he took out the 13 dice, each one with letters on each side and the sand-clock timer. He faced off against Connie, as Amethyst and Garnet were too tired to play such a game.

Each letter got a point value based on its frequency in the English language. The dice could be turned into words either up-and-down or left-to-right, a bit like other similar games, until the sand-clock runs out, then counting their points. Steven went first. He quickly came up with several interconnecting words: loom (seven points), which connected to the word hotter (11 points), building off the letter o, ray (seven points), building off the letter r, and yum (10 points), for a total of 35 points.

Connie went next, hoping to get a bigger score. She created a few words: oh (4 points), hue (7 points), pegs (11 points), gins (10 points), fee (6 points). But she couldn't use an i, so that was minus two points. This went on for three rounds on each side, and they ended up in a stalemate. Both shook hands and congratulated each other on a "good game."

In the late afternoon, many miles away, across the North American continent and Pacific Ocean, Jules twisted her keys around her finger. She yawned, awaiting the next tour group.

A group of two individuals walked in, one of whom overwhelmed her so much with their beauty that she fainted. The 21-year-old woman, wearing an orange strapped mini-skirt open at the chest in a u-shape, and a gold sash around the waist, rushed over, dropping their brown sunglasses in the process.

Calmly asking if Jules was OK, she responded with an affirmative "yes." She stared intently at the woman's brown eyes, hummingbird hairpiece, brown bob-cut hair with a dark tone and blonde highlights, as they picked up their sunglasses and helped her get back on her feet.

"Sorry…for passing out in front of you…I've never done that before. You are *so cute*, combined with the fact I am a bit tired today after yesterday was so intense."

Jules said, a bit embarrassed, "Uh…thanks."

Their cheeks turning red in embarrassment, the woman froze in place, feeling like they couldn't articulate their words. While they had avoided this feeling for years, Jules brought it back, something they had never expected from a museum curator. Another attractive woman, a year older, with teardrop-shaped eyes, long eye lashes over top lavender-purple eyes, and hair in a Beatles cut, stepped forward and bowed in deference.

"Miss, I'm Anna Suehiro, a fashion model…and this is *my joyfriend*, who likes to be called Yuri or Lily."

Jules spoke Japanese in response, saying the English equivalent of "A pleasure to meet you both. I'm Julia Argent, the curator of this wonderful museum. Is there anything you'd like to see today?"

Anna responded in kind to Jules. "No, we are perusing around. Wait…*is that Takatsuki*?"

He smiled back. He began speaking to her. "Hi…Anna and Yuri…it's been a long time...Yuri, you look very different from when we graduated together from Shinjuku High School. The SRS seems to have done wonders…have you changed your gender in the family registry, *yet*? I know that's one of the next steps."

Anna wanted to say something, but Yuri spoke first. She wanted to thank him.

"Thanks, Takatsuki, that's very kind. Last year, I put in an application *for a name change*. It's still being processed in the courts. I started HRT recently, paying for it with a new job as a physician. Although me and Anna can't marry because of the *arcane laws* in this country, we are working on changing that...even so, we are as happy as ever. It's a pleasure seeing you and I'd love for us to hang out sometime."

He grinned. He always liked talking to her. "I'd like that. Enjoy the tour. Let's *talk later*."

Jules grinned nervously as she tried to *not eavesdrop* on their conversation. Showing them artifacts, the museum had to offer, she stopped in front of the glass case holding the *recently re-installed* fedora and trench coat in a striking red color. "This is the coat and hat of the former V.I.L.E. member Carmen Sandiego, graciously provided by her after retiring from being a thief. She started in their crime school on V.I.L.E. Island, but later helped bring them down in an assault on their compound and gather the records and artifacts within this museum," Jules explained.

Yuri was impressed, even more than Anna. "That outfit is *so striking*…I wish we could touch the fabric and feel it ourselves," Yuri remarked. Jules smiled.

She had something special to show them. "In fact, we have a special treat for you today…Carmen is here in-person, a rare occurrence for this museum. Sweetie, *would you do the honors*?"

A voice could be heard responding. She said, "I'd love to, Jules!"

Jumping down from the spiral staircase, she coiled in the air and landed on the ground before them, wearing her trademark outfit. While Anna looked disinterested, almost regretting coming there, Yuri's eyes filled with wonder. She asked all sorts of questions. "So cool! How'd you get this *cute outfit*? What material is it made from?"

Carmen happily answered the questions. She always liked to talk about her fashion choices. "Great questions. My trench coat and wide-brim red cordovan hat are some sort of thick fabric, as it can keep me warm even in chilly weather. I *stole this* from the V.I.L.E. bookkeeper years ago and have worn it ever since. Would you like to see *inside the coat*?"

Yuri nodded. Why not see inside the coat of a beautiful woman like Carmen? She was curious about fashion, so this kind of thing interested her. It made her a little nervous, but she wanted to see it anyway.

"Great. Here's all my gadgets, like my lock decoder, zip-line launcher, flashlight pen, and a bunch more in my bag. I wanted to stay prepared…even if I retired and '*settled down*.'"

Yuri was confused. That last phrase threw her a bit. "What do you mean by 'settled down'?" Carmen laughed. She pointed to Jules and remarked, "Oh, Jules is *my girlfriend now*. It seems she didn't talk about it…yet."

As the face of Jules became as red as a tomato, she yelped. "Carmen! What did I tell you about…that?"

Jules felt uncomfortable, but Carmen calmed her down, reassuring her that it would be alright. Anna, who had tuned out much of this conversation, perked up her ears when hearing that Jules was the girlfriend of Carmen, especially in a world where people like Yuri, and other same-sex couples, were harassed, made fun of, or mocked. Even so, she didn't want to join in, but rather felt the conversation should play out *naturally.*

"So, Yuri, as you like to be called, how's your gender transition going?," Carmen remarked.

Yuri was taken aback by this. She did not want attention on something like this. It made her very nervous. "Huh…how did you know? That's personal!"

Carmen face-palmed. She hadn't meant to bring it up, but the words just blurted out. "Oh, I have all sorts of friends on this REZU video chat network me and Jules joined recently…and *some* talked about HRT and SRS…You are brave for what you are doing. *I'm sorry* that I came in and rudely brought it up and I apologize for that."

Yuri was relieved. She felt glad to hear this. "No need. *I'm glad* you are accepting. There are so many out there that are hostile toward people like me, stuck in their old ways and prejudices. I'm proud of my friends, like Takatsuki, who transitioned from being a girl into a boy, Makuto, who made the same transition as me, from a boy to a girl, and Yuki, who successfully works as a stockbroker, about 35 years old at this point, giving me inspiration to go forward. Of course, I can't thank my partner Anna or Chi, both of whom are a year older

than me, enough for their support. If you give me the contact information, I'll join the video chat network. Thanks for being understanding."

Carmen didn't know *what else to say*. She could only say three words: "It's my pleasure."

Both bowed toward each other. Anna and Yuri proceeded to look through the rest of the exhibits. Jules thanked them for coming in and being part of her tour.

Chapter 3: Dryl, Perfuma's Spy Drones, and Maintaining Friendship Across Universes

Chapter Summary

Perfuma talks to Entrapta late one night in Dryl, where they are both living together, as their friendship continues to blossom. They reach out to Lapis and Peridot on Earth, when they learn that Perfuma has been spying on Earth with her surveillance drones all this time (not Entrapta as they had thought), while Peridot and Lapis explain they are in a romantic relationship together and are growing hemp, even as some tensions between the latter two begin to surface.

Chapter Notes

Originally this was part of the same fic with chapters 1 and 2, but I decided to split it off when posting it here.

Light-years away in Dryl, Entrapta slumped in her chair, socially exhausted. Perfuma had prepared her well for Catra's trial, insuring she would speak in a professional manner, even as someone who called herself a *gregarious introvert*, as she'd revealed when she did that social experiment all that time ago. Since many of the princesses were extroverted, even ones which felt socially anxious at times, like Glimmer, soon-to-be Queen of Bright Moon, none of them empathized with her. Yawning, Perfuma, with matted light blonde hair, knocked on the door to Entrapta's laboratory. She had insomnia again. Her presence startled Entrapta.

"Hey there, Apta, shouldn't you be asleep? It's so late…," Apta said, while yawning.

She said, in a soft voice. "Fuma…grand flower princess…I could say the same *about you*."

Fuma chuckled. Apta could always cheer her up.

"Haha. I don't see myself as *grand*…I couldn't get to sleep, it's that simple. I keep thinking of my citizens back in Plumeria…I feel like I'm *abandoning* them."

She was concerned about her friend. She didn't want her to feel this way. "Don’t you have *someone* competent leading in your absence?"

Apta asked. Fuma yawned again. She knew she had to respond soon. "Yeah, my brother, Kelley. He's keeping me *posted* about what's happening."

Apta felt a little better now. She grinned and looked back at Fuma.

"In any case, I'm glad you are here…to keep me company…*as a friend*."

Fuma was glad to hear this. She didn't have time for romance, especially not know, because Apta *needed* to focus on her work. As such, Apta was completely right for her.

"I would do it for the world!…we are forming a close, intimate bond…a social one *rather than a sexual or romantic one* like Netossa and Spinnerella have," she added.

Stretching a little bit, Apta grumbled. On the one hand, she liked having Fuma for company. On the other, she wanted to be a bit alone. She was willing to bear Fuma's presence, *this time.*

"That's right! I still feel socially fatigued from yesterday. I get the sense you'd like to chat with somebody else…*other than me*…right now," she commented, solemnly.

Fuma tried to explain herself better. The *last thing* she'd want is for her friend to be angry with her. After all, she let her stay there for no charge, just to keep her company.

"I mean, I couldn't get to sleep, which is *why* I came to the lab, Apta. I mean, even my hair, is usually wavy and well-groomed, but I *could care less* about that or what anyone thinks of me."

That really resonated with Apta. She could care less about how people saw her. She *liked* to do her work alone, with help from no one else. It had been a big thing to let Fuma stay with her.

"That makes sense. I don't care much about my appearance *either*…would you object if I called Peridot right now?"

For Fuma, that name didn't ring a bell. She wanted to make sure she wasn't caught in some sort of conversation that felt awkward for her to be there at all. So, she asked, "*Who* is she again?"

As much as it annoyed Apta that she had to explain this, she knew it was necessary. She described who Peridot was. "…that cute little green Gem on this planet a couple months back…she has a *knack for technology*…and is on Earth…where Adora is living right now." Now Fuma got it. She understood who Apta was talking about. "Oh yeah, I remember her from our fight in the Fright Zone...and from *my* observations of Earth. Sure, give her a call."

Touching the screen with her prehensile hair, she searched through her short list of contacts. She tapped on one entry named "PERIDOT," the last one on the list. Other listings were for Bow and Glimmer, the only others she considered friends. A pop-up appeared asking if she would like to make an inter-dimensional video call, and she clicked "yes."

Twiddling her thumbs, she waited for the call to go through. Fuma offered to help if she got stuck, socially, despite the fact that Fuma *considered herself* socially awkward in her own way and had only *taught* herself to be more gregarious. This indicated how deeply she cared about Apta, accepting her, affirming her feelings and thoughts. Such a connection helped

Apta grow emotionally into a stronger person, providing her the necessary social support and relieving stress.

The sound of static echoed across the room, with Peri's face appearing on the screen, followed by Lapis. Although she served a similar role to Fuma, in her relationship with Peri, the former's relationship was sexual, while the latter relationship *was platonic*. Neither Peri nor Lapis had expected Apta to call. Peri only remembered her briefly from a few months before. "Long time…no talk…what's happening, Entrapta."

Apta waved at her. She loved to hear from her. "Working out some *new* experiments in my lab…my friend Perfuma is here too."

Fuma waved at her friends, just as Apta had. "Hi, Lapis! Hi, Peridot."

She loved hearing from Fuma and Apta. This made her happy. "Hello…Perfuma. Call me Peri, P-Dot, or Dot. Whatever suits your fancy."

Perfuma chuckled. She thought Peri was cool and she wanted to mess with her a bit. "Sure, sure. What's the haps on Earth…my cute green friend?"

Peri reacted defensively. She *did not* like when people called her...that word. "I'm *not cute*!"

Lapis jumped in. She had to clarify something. "Sorry, Perfuma, but that's a *sore subject* for her, she *gets angry* when people bring it up."

Peri, who had calmed down a bit by then, started to speak. She wanted to make it absolutely clear what she and Lapis were to each other.

"You may or may not know that Lapis and me are in a relationship right now…going *pretty steady*…we recently moved to this island nation…are growing this substance called 'hemp.'"

Apta's ears perked up, thinking Fuma had spoken enough at that point. Although she wasn't bubbly like her newfound friend, she felt comfortable around her, willing to share her feelings, and had a warmth unlike anyone else. Since Fuma lived in the same place as her, their communication was simple, both trusting each other *more every day*. Snickering, she directly asked Peri a question. "Ooh…hemp…what can you do with it, Peri?"

She explained to her friend all of its uses. She began to get more and more excited.

"...It can be turned into bedding, paper, lotions, oils, clothing, fuel, construction or packing materials…and *even eaten*…the plants are up to 15 feet tall, taking a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 6 months to grow…it can flourish almost anywhere on this planet."

Apta was impressed. She had *never* heard of such a thing. "Sounds like a miracle plant!…where can I get them?"

Peri then told her about the plants. She *liked* sharing her special interests. "We have some plants here on Earth…"

Fuma nodded. She understood, but she had her own plan. She piped up before Apta could say anything. "I'll have *my drones* pick up a sample and bring it back here."

Peri was confused. She didn't know what Fuma meant by drones.

"Drones?...huh?...What do you mean?" she asked.

Fuma knew it would be hard to admit this, but she had to. She *hoped* that Peri wouldn't get angry. She breathed deeply and started speaking.

"Oh, I have *over twenty probes* across Earth…monitoring activity there…for fun…I know that might sound weird, but I like observing others so I can become better socially...call me 'Fuma' rather then 'Perfuma.'"

Peri was a little surprised by this, she had *expected* that Apta would be doing this, not her. When Apta explained the whole thing and how she *opposed it*, Peri understood a little more.

Lapis spoke first. She added that she had done the same thing at the Moon Base *after* she had left Earth to *avoid* being re-traumatized by another war. She noted that by using an observation orb, she "sat there as Peri and the other Gems walked through me and sung a sweet song. Steven observed the whole thing from across the room."

Peri then turned to Lapis. She looked at her worriedly. "Um, Lapis…is there something…" she started to say.

Lapis's cheeks turned the same color as blueberries. She hadn't mentioned this *for fear* of what Peri would do, especially after hurting her lover by selfishly leaving…only to be poofed by Yellow Diamond after crashing the barn upon Blue Diamond. They reconnected when flying to Homeworld, their affection growing leaps and bounds, and developed a strong repertoire with Bismuth. She blurted it out now because she knew how much Peri struggled with social skills and didn't want her to lose any friends.

"Peri, I'm *so, so sorry* for not revealing it before now…I wanted to converse about it at the right time and place…to explain my state of mind. Sweetie, we can have this conversation later…*no need* to involve them."

Peri tried to make clear what she had meant. She didn't want to lose Lapis. "I understand, Lapis. The Moon is a lonely, desolate place…*it sucks*…While I fell into depression after you left…I hadn't been completely honest…and the trauma from spending those thousands of years trapped in a mirror…*I'm sorry*..."

She came close to Peri. She didn't want to lose her *either*. "Peri, it's OK. Let's discuss this at a future point."

Peri smiled. She didn't smile all the time, but when she did it was a beautiful thing.

"It's a date! Can I talk to Entrapta alone?" Lapis nodded. She wanted Peri to have some good friends and Apta was one of them. "Sure. Go on at it," she said, then walking out of the room, and blowing a kiss toward her. Fuma did the same thing, partially because she was a bit tired.

Apta stared at the screen, not sure how to process what Peri and Lapis had said to each other. Her magenta eyes connected with Peri's green eyes. She told Peri she preferred being called "Apta" rather than Entrapta. Peri got it, as someone who had a whole host of nicknames.

Fuma had left the room and returned to a place she had dubbed a "guest bedroom." Opening an ornate box, she pulled out a bound book, made from one of the trees in the Whispering Woods around Plumeria, and put it on the bedside table. She then proceeded to take out a small container, which had two sections. One held a bottle of ink, created from the berries nearby her royal realm, and the other had a carved stick, serving as a writing implement, like a fountain pen. Positioning herself on the edge of the bed and turning to an empty page, she dipped the stick into the ink bottle, and began to write the following words:

> *Hello again! Fourteen entries since I started living here over a month ago. Time really flies. My friend Apta has made tremendous progress. We respect each other as friends now. Although I feel an unselfish love toward everyone and everything, I don't have romantic or lewd feelings about Apta, or anyone! I care about her and her well-being, but we are not like Spinnerella and Netossa, married princesses who live in Bright Moon with the soon-to-be-crowned Queen, Glimmer, and former Queen Angella, now heading the Archives of Etheria. Although I know I have responsibilities as a princess, but I feel so comfortable here in Dryl…I' d like to leave my kingdom, or royal realm...behind…to live free. I don't want to be tied down. I'd even be willing to be the "ruler" of Dryl at Apta's side, if that's the officialdom that those other princesses and rulers of city-states think is necessary.*

Satisfied with her entry, she put down her stick-pen and proceeded to leave the book open so the ink could dry. She heard Apta calling from another room, which scared her a bit. She didn't want her journal to be accidentally read. As she thought back, she was reassured her. Apta respected her personal space, something she was getting better at, with her guidance. She listened intently to the voice bellowing from the other room.

"Fuma! I'm about to say goodbye to Lapis and Peri. Anything you'd like to say?"

She stopped what she was doing immediately and started to run over.

"Definitely! I'll be right there!" she said, coming as quick as she could.

Putting on a black cape to hide her casual clothes and quickly brushing her hair, she ran down to the laboratory. She opened the door hurriedly with a bang and sat down in a chair that Apta set out for her. She stared up at the screen, seeing a smiling Lapis and Peri…and some orange sentient creature, a new face.

"Hey, Fuma. I had a nice talk with Peri. How'd that trial, of *that cat-lady*, go yesterday?" Lapis asked.

Fuma began speaking, at first in hurried breathes. Then her breathing came back to normal.

"Let me…just…catch…my breath…whew!...the trial went well, although socially draining. Catra was unsurprisingly convicted…and sentenced to *life imprisonment* in the polar north of this planet. It seemed like a fair punishment…based on the ways she has wronged this

planet…I wish they had tried to show *more forgiveness*. Anyway…who is that orange-colored being?"

Lapis chuckled. She *loved* talking about her animal friends. "It's our four-legged friend, a sentient pumpkin…brought to life by our friend Steven…we love her every day…and are grateful to have her. Isn't that right…you cute veggie head?"

Pumpkin let out a low purr as Lapis petted her from head to tail. Peri rubbed her nose against the creature's nose. Clearly, both loved this animal with all their hearts, something which endeared it to Fuma. On the other hand, Apta didn't know what to think. As Pumpkin jumped away, Apta tried to get in one final word.

"Peri…would you like to join *my club* of inventors and experimenters? Bow, who now works at the Archives of Etheria, signaled his interest, but I hope you'd join since inventions you create are so cool…It can then be *inter-dimensiona*l!"

Peri grinned. She loved having a friend who was as nerdy as her. "Apta, I'd love to be part of that! Thanks for offering. I need to help our friends here with making dinner…but it has been *a pleasure* talking to you."

Apta liked talking to her too, even though she was a world away. She grinned. "Anytime. Feel free to reach out to me whenever, Peri!"

Chapter 4: Friends You Can Stand By: Perfuma's Present, Ms. Ehre's Offer, and Entrapta's New Role

Chapter Summary

Following their discussion with Peri and Lapis, Perfuma has a present for Entrapta, something which surprises her, but also sets the stage for the coming changes in Etheria, something which will change everything going forward.

Chapter Notes

This was originally part of the same fic with chapters 1-3, but when I posted this on Squidge World I decided to divide it into chapters. It made sense considering that each part of this story is distinct, but interrelated.

Apta let out a sigh of relief that the conversation had ended, only hinting that Peri should reach out so she didn't look rude, something Fuma had taught her.

Social fatigue, even after that conversation, was something she often experienced. This was part of the reason she stayed in Dryl, away from people.

Unlike others, who went headlong into social situations, she chose when and whom she talked to carefully, planning what needed to be said beforehand. From her observations, Peri *had some* of the same issues as her, but she didn't know how to express that to her in the right words.

Without warning, Fuma whispered in her ear that she had a surprise for her, as a good friend. Not knowing what this meant, she followed her friend out of Dryl blindfolded, so the surprise wouldn't be "ruined." Despite reservations about this, she trusted Fuma, knowing she wouldn't do *anything* to harm her.

They kept walking for an inordinate amount of time and then jumped off a cliff, scaring Apta a bit *until* they landed on a grassy boulder flying through the sky. The movement stopped. Stepping forward in a stride onto a grassy plain, Fuma pulled her along, running toward a wooden door. She knocked ferociously and an old frail man answered. Instead of sounding the alarm for the guards, *he let them in.* He respected both princesses.

The door closed behind them and Fuma took off Apta's blindfold. "Apta, welcome to the administrative center of Etheria, in Mystacor, where *all* matters relating to the planet's courts

are managed…"

Apta was confused. She had to make sure this wasn't a trick. "This isn't related to my trial…is it?"

The man reassured her it was okay. Her concern was not unfounded, though. "*You'll see*…just wait."

He then added, "Ladies. Follow me to Ms. Ehre's office. She's the manager of all court matters around here."

Entering the office, the old man retired and went back to his soon-to-end shift. Apta and Fuma sat in chairs in front of a huge wooden desk, with papers piled high and ink stamps scattered across the surface. Ms. Ehre swiveled around her chair to face them both. "Ms. Entrapta, Ms. Perfuma. We have been *expecting you*. We had to meet Ms. Perfuma too, after she agreed to be *your legal counsel*. Is there something you'd like to drink? Tea? Water?," she asked.

Apta smiled. She wanted to be as gracious as possible. "No, thanks, but I appreciate the offer."

Ms. Ehre continued explaining what this was all about. These legal procedures needed to be explained.

"Ms. Entrapta, I read over your testimony at Catra's trial yesterday and you provided some valuable information. From what I can tell, having a trial, in any form, would be duplicitous. Based on what Ms. Perfuma has told us, recalling your friendly and calm nature, and knack with technology, putting you in a holding cell or permanent prison would be a tragedy. This document will *return legal power* to your royal realm of Dryl, taken away by The Compact and given to a 'council of advisors'...end the possibility of trial, with Ms. Perfuma as an 'advisor,' to appease the other princesses and rulers. We have one condition: help us organize the court records from our past trials, since it is an utter mess."

Apta was impressed. She had *never* imagined of such a thing. "With my prehensile hair and skills, I could do a lot of good! I *happily agree* to your offer."

Signing her name, the requirement to her trial *was waived* under the condition she conduct this duty. This document held high importance since the other princesses might try to contest it. But, Ms. Ehre, as the head of administrative court matters on the planet, had the signatory authority to execute Article II, section P of The Compact of Etheria, stating that "Mystacor will be the location where administrative matters relating to Etheria's courts shall be managed."

This power, Ms. Ehre argued, superseded the one stated in Article IV, section X, sub-section d, stating that "Entrapta will be the tech advisor, until her trial has concluded," referring to the Archives of Etheria, and Article IV, section Y, declaring that Dryl would be overseen by a council of advisors appointed by the signatories, "until the trial of Entrapta is concluded" with its fate then "decided by the signatories."

As one of the Compact's signatories, Fuma exercised her right to "decide to revise this compact as needed," as she saw it, under Article V, section I, and her ability to have "ultimate authority on all domestic and foreign issues" as a ruler of a royal realm, under Article IV, section V. She also had the power under Article II, section D, that those charged with crimes, in any courts, could have someone "represent them from the planet itself."

Furthermore, this document was legal under Article III, section S, sub-section a, stating that for some former members of the Horde, the "punishment for past transgressions would be community service." Her work for the administrators in Mystacor fell under this definition. Although Article III, section Q stated that no person formerly part of the Horde could "hold any position of power within the planet's royal realms or city-states," this document classified Dryl as an independent sovereign entity, different from a royal realm or city-state.

Furthermore, as the ruler of Plumeria, a royal realm, her word had the power of law (Article I, section A), and she had the power to "grant pardons and commute sentences" (Article I, section C). She added this legality to the document by signing her name. Ms. Ehre then stamped it, with the reverberation echoing across the table. She promised to make copies of this document, sending it to all the princesses who led royal realms and rulers of the city-states. Closing the door behind her, she led them down a hallway to another room.

A man stepped forward and approached Ms. Apta. He grinned and bowed. "Welcome, Ms. Entrapta, to the administrative center of Etheria. Thanks for agreeing to help us organize our messy paper files!"

Apta smiled. She moved being around messes, papers, and disorganization, as it gave her a chance to make a difference, although she liked places that were orderly better.

"In turn, I *appreciate* the efforts of all those in this office to get me out of this awful conundrum. Let's *get to work*!"

End Notes

The pages for Blue Pearl and Peridot on the Steven Universe fandom, the pages for Perfuma and Entrapta on the She-Ra fandom, the pages for Nitori Shuichi (also known as Yuri/Lily), Anna Suehiro, and Takatsuki Yoshino on the Wandering Son fandom, the page for Carmen Sandiego on the Carmen Sandiego fandom were extensively used for this story. The song Adora sings is an adaptation of the closing theme ("For You") of Wandering Son, while the dancing in rose petals is also a reference to the animated sequence in Wandering Son too. I used this page to estimate the 215 acres near Miura, considering they live near the train station.

Word Scramble is just another name for Scribbige, one of my favorite games ever! The clothing that Yuki wore is based on outfits of Japanese transgender models Kayo Satoh, Ai Haruna, and Ayana Tsubaki. I wanted to use clothing by Aya Kamikawa and Ayako Fuchigami, but both were too old to use in this story. I concluded that their outfits were: a black strapless mini-skirt with a white sash around the waist; brown-tinted sunglasses, a shirt tied at the waist, a grey and silver belt, a shirt black skirt; a grey strapped dress with silver highlights, and a butterfly hairpiece; a heart necklace, small dangling silver earrings; a white blouse; a black tank top with a blue clothing underneath, with a bra; and a white sweater, while also considering a white camisole as an option.

I tried to stick with the gender neutral pronouns here, rather than using zie/zir/zirs/zirself, since "the third person plural (they, them, their, themselves) instead of the third-person singular (he/she, his/hers, him/her, himself/herself)" is acceptable "when referring to someone who has not expressed a clear pronoun choice" as noted by the LGBT Resource Center at the University of Southern California. Ehre is German for honor, which is why I chose that name for the bureaucrat.

Works inspired by this one

Rise of the Scarlet Wildcat by lefemmerouge

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